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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations welcomes reports Bosnian Serbs will release remaining peace-keepers held hostage, but says nothing has been confirmed; UNHCR says no relief convoys have reached Bosnian enclaves for weeks.

+ Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend UNAMIR mandate for six months; says focus should shift from peace-keeping to confidence-building, citing radical changes in situation in Rwanda.

+ FAO Director-General warns global food stocks are likely to fall below minimum necessary for world food security.

+ Secretary-General says implementation of Lusaka Protocol has entered new and promising phase; parties must cooperate even more with United Nations.

+ All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue concludes with adoption of Schlaining Declaration by consensus.

+ Mozambique chosen by lot to occupy first seat in General Assembly Hall during fiftieth session.

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A United Nations spokesman today said he was encouraged by reports that the Bosnian Serbs would release the remaining peace-keepers being held hostage in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He underlined that those reports had not been confirmed, although there had been indications from Pale that some action would be taken shortly.

The situation in Sarajevo was stable today, with a relatively low number of firing incidents reported. A French observation post and an Egyptian armoured personnel carrier were targeted yesterday, but there were no casualties. The Bosnian

(more)

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Serbs continued to target the Mount Igman logistics road, and three French journalists were injured when their vehicle was hit by a shell and went off the road.

Calm prevailed in Croatia today, with the exception of Sector South, the spokesman continued. There was continued hostility toward United Nations personnel there, and two more vehicles were hijacked. There were also severe restrictions on the movement of United Nations personnel, and military observers were unable to patrol in Serb-held territory.

In another development, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that its humanitarian airlift had now been suspended for more than two months. Meanwhile, no convoys had reached Sarajevo or the eastern enclaves for the last two weeks. There was an acute food shortage in Bihac, which had not received a relief convoy since 21 May.

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The Security Council should extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) for six months to 9 December, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report dated 4 June, he said UNAMIR was an essential part of the international community's effort to assist Rwanda. He noted that there had been radical changes in the situation there since the establishment of the present Government and the end of the war and the genocide. He recommended certain adjustments to the mandate, with a shift in focus from peace-keeping to confidence-building.

UNAMIR should undertake tasks required to sustain a peace-keeping presence in Rwanda, including the protection of United Nations premises and agencies and International Tribunal personnel, he said. It should also assist the Government in confidence-building and in promoting a climate conducive to stability and the return of refugees and displaced persons. That would entail monitoring throughout the country and helping in the distribution of humanitarian assistance, but not patrolling. The report said troop strength should be gradually reduced from 5,500 to 2,330.

The Government of Rwanda had proposed that UNAMIR's role be limited to monitoring and that its strength be reduced to 1,800 troops, the report pointed out. However, such a level would not

allow the Mission to adequately perform its tasks. The Secretary-General said he would continue consultations with the Government and would report orally to the Council before it decided on the future mandate.

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Global food stocks are likely to fall below the minimum necessary for world food security next year, according to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Jacques Diouf. He said the global food and agriculture situation required vigilance, noting that some countries were currently experiencing food shortages. He made those comments to the FAO Governing Council as it began a two-week session in Rome yesterday.

Mr. Diouf said world cereal production was forecast at 1.93 billion tons in 1995, representing a decline of 20 million tons, or 1 per cent, from last year. That level of production would not meet expected consumption needs, and carry-over stocks were expected to fall 10 per cent to 270 million tons at the end of the 1996 crop-year.

Fifteen sub-Saharan African countries were already facing food shortfalls requiring exceptional or emergency assistance, he continued. A massive drop in cereal output was expected in southern Africa due to widespread drought, and a poor harvest in 1996 would spell disaster for millions of people there.

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In the latest progress report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), the Secretary-General said the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol had entered a new and promising phase. However, he stressed that the deployment of UNAVEM III infantry must be matched by even greater cooperation by the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) with the United Nations in implementing all major provisions of the Protocol.

The Secretary-General noted that while much progress had been achieved recently, the Angolan peace process was behind schedule. Major efforts would be required to make up for the delay, he concluded.

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The first All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue concluded yesterday in Austria by adopting the "Burg Schlaining Declaration". Adopted by consensus, the Declaration calls for a continuation of dialogue, and reaffirms the need to implement measures in the field of human rights to promote peace, stability, justice and social harmony. It also reaffirms that the social and cultural development of East Timor should be based on the preservation of the cultural identity of the people.

The Dialogue was initiated by the Secretary-General in the context of his good offices on the question of East Timor, and facilitated by the United Nations. The participants reaffirmed the importance of the ongoing negotiations between the Governments of Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

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The Secretary-General today chose Mozambique by lot as the first Member State to be seated during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, which will begin on 19 September. The Mozambican delegation will be seated at the extreme left in the front row of the General Assembly Hall. Seating will proceed in English alphabetical order from there.

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